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COOKE SAID TO TELL OF COPYING DATA

Air Force Documents Assert Officer Admitted Providing U.S. Secrets to Soviets

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 6 — The Air Force asserted today that Second Lieut. Christopher M. Cooke, who has been accused of unauthorized contacts with the Soviet Embassy here, had admitted "that for approximately a year he had been photocopying, copying and giving to the Soviets secret and top secret information relating to the American strategic nuclear employment."

In a document filed with the Court of Military Appeals here, the Air Force also asserted that an initial promise of immunity to Lieutenant Cooke by Air Force investigators was invalid because Lieutenant Cooke changed his original story from an assertion that he had been working on a research project to admission of possible espionage.

The document appeared to be the fullest official disclosure yet of the case of Lieutenant Cooke, a deputy commander of a Titan missile crew at McConnell Air Force Base in Kansas, which evidently shook Air Force commanders from the former Commander of the Strategic Air Command, Gen. Richard Ellis, on down.

When Lieutenant Cooke was first taken into custody in early May, he told agents of the Air Force Office of Special Investigations that he had visited the Soviet Embassy here in an effort to obtain Soviet views for a research paper he hoped to have published in an academic journal.

Original Explanation

The lieutenant, who had majored in international relations and shown an interest in Soviet affairs while a graduate student at William and Mary College, told the investigators that he hoped to get a position as a political analyst at the Central Intelligence Agency, the State Department or perhaps at a leading university. He put that statement into writing.

Two days later, however, according to the Air Force document, Lieutenant Cooke gave the investigators a different version in which they contended that he admitted to passing sensitive information to Soviet officials. That led to an interrogation that lasted five days, after which Lieutenant Cooke put his statement into writing, the Air Force said.

While Lieutenant Cooke's first written statement was included as an appendix to the court documents filed today, the second was not. The Air Force said it was classified secret but would be available to the court if the court wanted to see it. The Air Force also said that Lieutenant Cooke had taken a polygraph, or lie detector, test after his second statement and that it had shown no deception on his part.

The Air Force further contended that Lieutenant Cooke's "visits to the Soviet Embassy were by appointment and, therefore, not casual; he was intrigued with spy and clandestine scenarios; and he had even spoken to one individual about selling classified information."

The Air Force also said that there was evidence independent of statements from Lieutenant Cooke that from June 1980 through May he "engaged in a series of contacts with and visits" to the Soviet Embassy in Washington, "the purpose of which was to compromise the information to which he had access."

"In this purpose, he succeeded," the Air Force contended. The Air Force said the information included codes and plans relating to the Titan missiles, which are intercontinental missiles within the United States strategic nuclear deterrent force. Those codes and plans were changed after the discovery of Lieutenant Cooke's visits to the Soviet Embassy, officials here said earlier.